

yediAUt



AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

NEWS FROM THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM AND THE CENTER FOR ISRAEL STUDIES ■ FALL 2022

FROM THE DIRECTORS



Top to Bottom: Michael Brenner, CIS Director; Pamela Nadell, JSP Director; Laura Katz Cutler, CIS Managing Director

Once again, the annual newsletter of AU's Center for Israel Studies and Jewish Studies Program shares highlights from the past year. Even as we were delighted to return to in-person programming last fall, we continued our virtual programming so that our friends from around the world could continue to learn from the leading scholars, politicians, and public intellectuals we invite to AU. We hosted programs on democracy in the United States, Israel, and Europe. Our series "Europe's Jews Before the Holocaust" brought the authors of four new books to our audiences. We interviewed members of the team behind the Ken Burns' documentary "The U.S. and the Holocaust." With our co-host AU's School of Public Affairs, we considered whether Weimar Germany's history provides insights into present threats to democracy in the U.S. And we addressed Israel's challenges as a Jewish and democratic state in our fall conference "Challenges Facing Israel's Democracy."

As always, we thank you for your support. Your generosity brings our students and audiences excellence in teaching and opportunities for expanding their knowledge of Jewish and Israel Studies. ■



Top: Aluf Benn (Haaretz) Bottom: Nasreen Haj Yahya (NAS Consulting), Michael Koplow (Israel Policy Forum) and Gayil Talshir (Hebrew U.)

CHALLENGES FACING ISRAEL'S DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE



Dan Arbell (AU), Anwar Mahajna (Stonehill College), Gadeer Kamal-Mreeh (Jewish Agency), Yifat Bitton (Achva Academic College) and Natan Sachs (Brookings Institution)

Five national elections in three-and-a-half years attest to the polarization and splintering of the Israeli party system. Is Israeli democracy in real danger or are dire warnings raised by some an exercise in hyperbole? What measures might Israel take to strengthen and help to preserve its democracy? This November, following the Israeli elections, the Center for Israel Studies hosted an international confer-

ence, *How Many Elections Can Israel Handle? Challenges Facing Israel's Democracy* to address these and other related questions.

In the keynote address Aluf Benn, the editor-in-chief of *Haaretz*, outlined key events shaping the current state of democracy in Israel. His list included the 2015 election, the coalition formed in its aftermath between

Benjamin Netanyahu and the Jewish Home party, led by Naftali Bennett, and the passing of the Israeli "Nation-State Bill" in July 2018.

For Benn Israel has changed since that 2015 election. He said that the passing of the Nation State Law, which specifies the nature of the State of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, became the "catalyst for the marginalization of Israeli democracy." This Basic Law has cemented the view that "Israel is a Jewish state first, and a democracy is second."

The conference brought a dozen experts to examine these themes further in panels on "Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State," an analysis of the 2022 Israeli Elections, and "The Future of Democracy in Israel."

The conference was generously funded by Amy and Alan Meltzer and June and David Trone and co-sponsored by AU's School of International Service and School of Public Affairs, Americans for Ben-Gurion University, Greater Washington Forum on Israeli Arab Issues, and the Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation. ■

TZIPI LIVNI GIVES PERLMUTTER LECTURE

In February, former Israeli Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Tzipi Livni delivered the Amos Perlmutter Memorial Lecture, "Israel as a Jewish Democratic State: Vision and Challenges" to hundreds of online viewers. The challenges she enumerated included the distorted perception in which the world views Israel, threats from

extremism in the region, peace with Palestinians, and relations with Jewish communities worldwide.

Livni described her vision for Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, one that upholds the value of equality, emphasizing that 'This [achieving and maintaining peace and equality] is the only way to keep the values of Israel as a Jewish democratic state living in harmony, not in contradiction.' She maintained that achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace is not only in Israel's interest, it is essential to her



Tzipi Livni

vision of Israel as a Jewish democratic state. The talk was co-sponsored by the School of Public Affairs and Center for Israel Studies. ■

PRIME MINISTER'S DOCUMENTARY SERIES



Yael Perlov and Michael Brenner

Award-winning filmmaker and Tel Aviv University professor Yael Perlov discussed her 2019 documentary film, *Ben-Gurion: Epilogue*. Based on six hours of never-seen interviews with an 82-year-old introspective David Ben-Gurion, it provides insights into decisions he made as Israel's prime minister and his vision for the country. The screening and discussion was the first in a yearlong CIS Prime Ministers Documentary Film series sponsored by the Ken and Mimi Heyman Israel Studies Programming Fund; it will continue with film screenings and discussions about Golda Meir, Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Rabin and others. ■

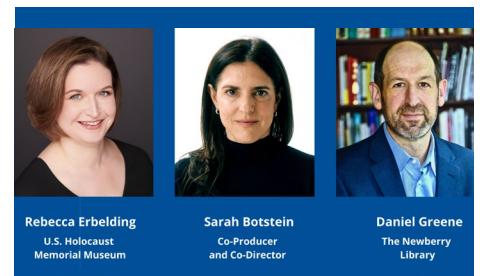
WELCOME TO ISRAELI THEATERLAND

In February, Visiting Israeli theater director and Israel Institute Visiting Professor Roy Horovitz hosted *Welcome to Theaterland*, an online talk about Israel's lively theater scene, which he described as "a theatrical empire. In Tel Aviv alone we have every evening some 50, 60 different shows, and Israel enjoys the 12th year in a row the highest rate of theater goers in the world per capita." In April, students in his Israeli theater class performed excerpts from Israeli plays, including those by Hanoch Levin, Joshua Sobel and Michael Morris Reich. ■



Evan Katzman '25, Ruby Coleman '22 and Jack Bosshardt '25 perform scene by Hanoch Levin.

THE U.S. AND THE HOLOCAUST



Rebecca Erbelding
U.S. Holocaust
Memorial Museum

Sarah Botstein
Co-Producer
and Co-Director

Daniel Greene
The Newberry
Library

To celebrate the PBS launch of the acclaimed Ken Burns's series "The U.S. and the Holocaust," the Jewish Studies Program hosted a conversation with series co-producer and co-director Sarah Botstein, and historical advisors and on-screen "talking heads" Rebecca Erbelding and Daniel Greene, moderated by Professor Pamela Nadell (Jewish Studies Program). ■

IS DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED STATES ENDANGERED? LESSONS FROM WEIMAR GERMANY



Cynthia Miller-Idriss, Michael Brenner, and Chris Edelson

In October, just prior to the US mid-term elections, Professors Michael Brenner (Center for Israel Studies), Cynthia Miller-Idriss (School of Public Affairs) and Chris Edelson (Dept.

of Government) engaged in a timely discussion, moderated by Professor Pamela Nadell (Jewish Studies Program) of the question: *Is Democracy in the United States Endangered? Lessons from Weimar Germany*. Their animated discussion was moderated by Professor Pamela Nadell (Jewish Studies Programs).

Professor Brenner provided the backdrop by highlighting several factors associated with the rise of authoritarianism in the form of Hitler and Nazism in Weimar Germany. These factors included an ongoing economic, social and political crisis, the delegitimization of democratic structures, polarization, the weakness of the democracy's gatekeepers (e.g., the judiciary) and the enablers of the authoritarian move-

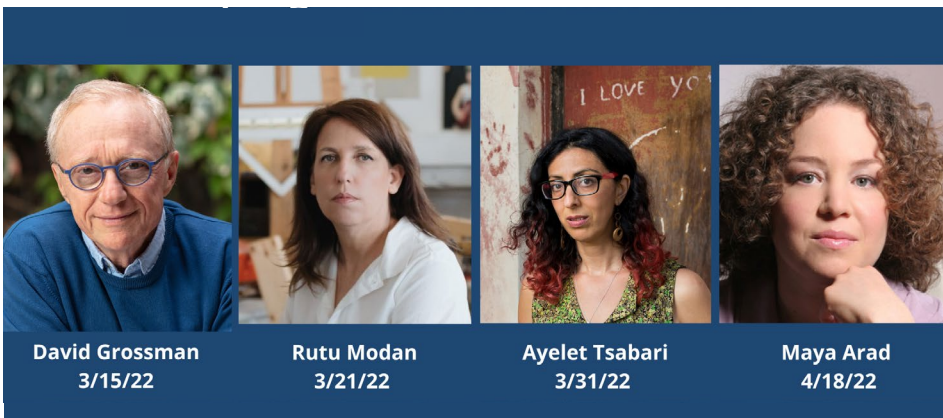
ment who thought they could "contain" Hitler. Professor Edelson then brought the audience forward to today by highlighting the scapegoating of minorities, the lack of accountability for authoritarian actions like the insurrection on January 6, and the failure of constitutional mechanisms to constrain authoritarian threats in the US. Finally, Professor Miller-Idriss offered her perspective on the role of propaganda in the normalization of hatred through social media and what might be done about it. Possible solutions include recognizing when democracy is backsliding, deploying tools to help ordinary people recognize and reject propaganda, and, perhaps, copying the example of Germany who invested heavily in anti-extremism prevention programs for 25 years. ■

EUROPE'S JEWS BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST

Last spring, American University's Jewish Studies Program hosted a webinar series spotlighting new books on Europe's Jews before the Holocaust. The talks were co-sponsored by the Center for Israel Studies. In the first conversation, award-winning author and University of Michigan professor, Jeffrey Veidlinger spoke about his new book, *In the Midst of Civilized Europe: The Pogroms of 1918-1921* and the *Onset of the Holocaust* with fellow historian Michael Brenner. Hundreds tuned in to hear how Veidlinger, by drawing upon long-neglected archival materials, including thousands of newly discovered witness testimonies and trial records, proved that this wave of genocidal violence created the conditions for the Holocaust. ■



ISRAELI WRITERS SERIES



A conversation with renowned Israeli writer David Grossman kicked off a virtual spring series featuring contemporary Israeli writers. Hundreds of people attended the talks, given

in conjunction with Professor Lauren Strauss's "Voices of Modern Jewish Literature" class. Students in the class loved hearing from the authors which they had read. ■

ADVICE FROM DR. RUTH



Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer, well-known sex therapist, talk show host, author, professor, Holocaust survivor, and former Haganah sniper, gave students lessons to live by when she came virtually to Professor Michael Brenner's History of Israel class. She described her time fighting for Israel's independence and advised students to look for "hallelujah moments" in their lives. ■

ADDITIONAL LECTURES AND PROGRAMS 2021-2022

All the Horrors of War: A Jewish Girl, A British Doctor and the Liberation of Bergen-Belsen by author Bernice Lerner (Boston University's Center for Character and Social Responsibility) in Professor Pamela Nadell's Holocaust class.

Authentically Orthodox: A Tradition Bound by author Zev Eleff, (President of Gratz College), in Professor Pamela Nadell's American Jewish History class

Beyond the Count: Perspectives and Lived Experiences of Jews of Color by Ari Kelman, (Stanford University) in Professor Pamela Nadell's American Jewish History class

Extracted: Unmasking Rampant Antisemitism in America's Higher Education author

S. Perry Brickman, D.D.S., discussed his experiences with antisemitism at Emory University's dental school in Professor Pamela Nadell's class Antisemitism: Enduring Hatred

Israel and Morocco: Reflections One Year After Normalization of Relations with Israel, with former Israeli foreign minister Shlomo Ben-Ami (Tel Aviv University), Aomar Boum (UCLA), and Michael Brenner (AU)

"Jewish Savannah in Atlantic Perspective," by Aviva Ben-Ur, (University of Massachusetts), in Professor Pamela Nadell's American Jewish History class

The Madrid Peace Conference Legacy: Thirty Years Later with Hanan Ashrawi, Yossi Beilin, and Daniel Kurtzer (Princeton University)

"To the East"—The Short Life of German-Speaking Jews after their Deportation to Occupied Eastern Europe with Andrea Löw (Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Munich), and Maurice C. Shapiro Senior Scholar-in-Residence, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) presented to Professor Pamela Nadell's Holocaust class as part of the AU-USHMM Holocaust Forum

Two States or One? Rethinking the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict with Yael Aronoff (Michigan State University), Omri Boehm (The New School for Social Research), Saliba Sarsar (Monmouth University), and Michael Brenner (AU) ■

OUR ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Avi Gold at Embassy of Israel

As Press Officer at the Embassy of Israel, **Avi Gold '22**, Jewish Studies major, International Studies minor, applies his college education to his first job post graduation. During Gold's se-

nior year, he interned at the Embassy of Israel. He calls Professors Pamela Nadell, Michael Brenner and Lauren Strauss “awesome” mentors and influential teachers. In particular, he says Professor Nadell encouraged him to explore the pieces of Jewish Studies that he connected with as her student and as the program leader in her Complex Problems class, *Antisemitism: Exploring Hatred*. “A lot of that came down to Israel’s history, Jewish history, and contemporary politics and international affairs.” All factor into his talking about Israel in his current media and communications role at the Embassy of Israel.



Adi Paliti

As Finance Operations Manager for Hadassah’s Western Region, **Adi Paliti MA '14**, International Studies, says he is “proud, honored and so humbled to be supporting Hadassah’s mission to provide some of the best healthcare in the world to all the residents of Israel and Palestine – Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, religious and secular.” Paliti brought an accounting background to his study at AU, which he applied as the bookkeeper for AU Hillel and as the Center for Israel Studies’ administrator.

CENTER FOR ISRAEL STUDIES

American University’s Center for Israel Studies is one of the nation’s premier centers for educating about today’s Israel—its achievements and its challenges. Our approach is multi-disciplinary, going beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict to study modern Israel’s history, vibrant society, culture, multiethnic democracy, and complex geopolitical issues. The center’s goal is to enhance scholarship and knowledge in the university and the wider community about a multifaceted Israel. Using AU’s expertise in global education, and its central location in Washington, D.C., CIS seeks to connect Israel to the next generation of young leaders and to serve as a national and international hub for nurturing and catalyzing Israel studies.

JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

American University’s commitment to the Jewish Studies Program dates back to the early 1970s. Since then, AU’s Jewish Studies Program has included a major and a minor and offered courses across the curriculum, including in our General Education Program, for all AU students. For more than forty years, AU’s Jewish Studies Program has advanced research and teaching and fostered a greater understanding of Jewish Studies scholarship on our campus and among our wider community.



Claire Bailey & Zach Blaufeder

Claire Bailey '16 International Studies major, says becoming a Jewish Studies minor deepened her understanding of Jewish history, culture, and connection with Israel. This helped her land her first job as Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement at the American Jewish Committee’s (AJC) Project Interchange, which arranges study trips to Israel for influential leaders. Bailey started at AJC as an intern her senior year, blending her passions for international relations and Jewish studies. While also pursuing a Masters in Public Administration at AU, Bailey was promoted to AJC’s Associate Director of Programming for Global Events. “One of my career highlights was extending an invitation to my personal mentor, Professor Pamela Nadell, to debate journalist Brett Stephens at AJC’s 2022 Global Forum’s Great Debate on whether the ‘Golden Age of American Jewry was Over.’ As my advisor, Prof. Nadell recommended a book about Jewish professional leadership, including the lack of women in higher Jewish professional leadership positions. her encouragement to think about identity, race, gender, and culture was transformative and has helped me become a better advocate and stronger Jew,” says Bailey. AJC also shaped Claire’s personal life. At Project Interchange, she met her fiancé, **Zach Blaufeder AU '16**, then Project Interchange’s Assistant Director of Programming. Zach is now Assistant Director of AJC’s Belfer Institute for Latino and Latin American Affairs. We send Claire and Zach congratulations on their upcoming March 2023 wedding!



Elysia Martin

“I’m not Jewish but getting involved in CIS and JSP was the best decision I made in college,” said **Elysia Martin '18**. A Phi Beta Kappa Jewish Studies major with many Israel Studies courses under her belt, Martin is breaking new ground in the field of Jewish-Christian relations. She was recently promoted to Director of Donor Engagement with Passages, which sponsors Israel trips for Christian college students. “My involvements with JSP and CIS sparked my passion for Israel and Jewish-Christian relations. My work has allowed me to help provide thousands of students with the life-changing experience of traveling to Israel to understand the Jewish roots of their faith, experience modern Israel and develop their leadership abilities.”



Jessica Horst right, with her mentor Laura Cutler

After AU, **Jessica Horst KSB '19** earned a masters degree in Public Health with a focus on disaster management at Tel Aviv University. Now living with her fiancé in Ashdod, Israel, she is a project manager for Shalom Corps, a global Jewish Volunteer network involved in meaningful and significant volunteerism. She credits her experiences as a 4-yr. intern at CIS for instilling in her a passion for Israel.

MEET OUR STUDENTS



Zachary Ainbinder-Barkley

Zachary Ainbinder-Barkley, SIS '24, Israel Studies minor, has been passionate about Israeli politics since childhood. AU's Israel Studies program inspired him to further this passion inside and outside the classroom and as editor-in-chief of *Student Israelity*—a student-run, blog about all things Israel. Outside the classroom, he joins Professor Guy Ziv for biweekly discussions on Israeli politics. “Professor Ziv has such a wide array of knowledge that you always learn something new from him, even if it is a five-minute conversation,” says Ainbinder-Barkley. He has also interned for former Congressman Ted Deutch and was a research intern at the Abba Eban Institute at Reichman University (Herzliya, Israel). He hopes to pursue a career in international relations with a Middle East focus.



Tamara Listenberg and Jamie Sharabani

Tamara Listenberg '23, International Studies major and Israel Studies minor, regularly participates in Professor Guy Ziv's Israeli politics discussions. As an Israeli, she was amazed at how invested and updated the students in the meetings were about Israeli politics, “probably more than most of my friends back home!” At the same time she sensed some students on campus coming under attack for their Zionism. Listenberg co-founded the

student club Students Supporting Israel (SSI) with **Jamie Sharabani '25** “to create a safe space for dialogue, a loving community, and collective strength through educating students about Israeli politics, life, and culture.” She describes herself as “proud to be a confident Jewish Zionist Israeli voice on campus...Being more open-minded to different opinions is something I have learned from my Israel Studies professors.”



Ruby Coleman working the polls for the Connecticut primary

Ruby Coleman '25, political science major, decided to minor in Jewish Studies after taking Professor Pamela Nadell's complex problems course, *Antisemitism: Enduring Hatred*. At AU Coleman is Vice President for Philanthropy and Service for Sigma Delta Thau and holds AU Hillel's “Repair the World” internship, where she has mobilized students to participate with So Others Might Eat and for the “Hunger Packing” initiative at Washington Hebrew Congregation (where she is a teaching assistant). ■

CIS ISRAEL WRITING AWARD

Congratulations to the winners of the CIS Israel Writing Award: Sophie Balmagiya '24 won for her personal essay about her Zionism and concerns about the Israeli occupation, which was published in *The Blogs of The Times of Israel*. Donniel Hartman, President of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, was so impressed with the essay that he hosted Sophie at Hartman's summer leadership seminar.

Evan Dewitt '23 won for his research paper, “Israel-Palestine and Student Identity: Campus Discourses of Antisemitism and Decolonial Advocacy.”



Evan Dewitt

In recognition of her deep commitment to understanding Israel and her love of writing, Literature Professor Emerita Myra



Sophie Balmagiya

Sklarew established this annual student prize. Entries were judged anonymously by a panel of professors. ■

FACULTY NOTES

Dan Arbell, Israel Studies Scholar in Residence, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), commented on current Israeli affairs, including the recent Israeli elections, for US and international media. He is an associate fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies-Americas.

Boaz Atzili, School of International Studies (SIS), is on a Fulbright-Nehru Fellowship in India for the 2022-23 academic year, where his study of the India-China border and borderlands is part of a larger project comparing the role and function of buffer zones in Asia and the Middle East.

Michael Brenner, Department of History, (CAS), was promoted to the rank of Distinguished Professor. Princeton University Press published his book “In Hitler’s Munich: Jews, the Revolution and the Rise of Nazism.” His article “New Ghetto and Emancipation” appeared in *Studies on Jewish Experience*. He was re-elected as International President of the Leo Baeck Institute for the Study of German-Jewish History and Culture and serves on the boards of academic centers at the Hebrew University Jerusalem and at University of Haifa.

Gershon Greenberg, Department of Philosophy and Religion (CAS), served as Visiting Professor of Jewish Thought at Bar Ilan University; published *Eliezer Schweid, Siddur Hatefillah: The Jewish Prayer Book. Philosophy, Poetry and Mystery, Translated with an Introduction by Gershon Greenberg*; and was appointed Visiting Professor for Holocaust research at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Institute for Contemporary Jewry.

Alan Kraut, Department of History (CAS), published “The Jews and Medicine in American Culture” in Jonathan Sarna and Adam Mendelsohn, eds., *Yearning to Breathe Free: Jews in Gilded Age America*. Kraut continues to chair the History Advisory Committee (HAC) of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation.

Lisa Leff, Department of History (CAS), continues to serve as director of the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Pamela Nadell, Department of History (CAS), published her award-winning *America’s Jewish Women: A History from Colonial Times to Today* in Hebrew, and the book launch was held at Tel Aviv’s ANU: The Museum of the

Jewish People. In June she debated *New York Times* columnist Bret Stephens at the AJC Global Forum on “Is the Golden Age of American Jewry Over?”

Aaron Posner, Department of Performing Arts (CAS), directed students in the acclaimed play, *The Sins of Sor Juana*, written by Karen Zacarías.

Lauren B. Strauss, Jewish Studies Program (CAS) is Co-Chair of the Greater Washington Forum on Israeli Arab Issues. She continues to coordinate the Center for Israel Studies’ Israeli Writers Series in coordination with her Voices of Modern Jewish Literature course.

Guy Ziv, received an SIS Faculty Exceptional Research Award (FERA) to research in Israel this on civil-military relations and populist nationalism. He delivered a paper, “Populist Nationalism in Israel and the Decline of the Once-Hallowed Status of the Generals,” at the Association of Israel Studies annual meeting, Bar-Ilan University, Israel, in June. He was interviewed on the Israeli elections on Ian Masters’ Radio show, TRT World Now (TV), BBC World (TV), BBC News Channel (UK TV), and published his election analysis in *The Conversation*. ■

WELCOME NEW FACULTY



DR. JULIE KERESZTES

Dr. Julie Keresztes is a historian of modern Germany who specializes in the Third Reich and the Holocaust. She is the 2022-2024 American University and Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies Postdoctoral Fellow. She previously taught at Tufts University from 2020 to 2022. Keresztes received her Ph.D. with distinction in History from Boston University and is

the recipient of fellowships and grants from the German Historical Institute, the Leo Baeck Institute, the American Academy for Jewish Research, and the Central European History Society. She is currently finishing a book manuscript on photography in Nazi Germany, and is working on a critical biography of Heinrich Hoffmann, Adolf Hitler’s personal photographer. ■

MICHAEL BRENNER NAMED DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR



In February 2022, the AU Board of Directors confirmed the promotion of Michael Brenner, Abensohn Chair in Israel Studies, to Distinguished Professor, the university’s highest rank shared by only 13 others at the university. He is shown above, with AU President Sylvia Burwell at the ceremony marking the promotion. The rank honors eminent AU faculty whose scholarship has earned national and international renown. Distinguished professors have shaped their field through path-breaking original scholarship. ■

This represents a list of all gifts of \$250 and up (\$72 for people 35 and under) made to the Center for Israel Studies and the Jewish Studies Program in the College of Arts and Sciences between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

Lillian Klein Abensohn **AU** ♦
 Jesse M. Abraham
 Gary M. Abramson '68 and Pennie M. Abramson **P** ♦
 Judith M. Alembik '60
 Nancy L. Alper WCL'79
 Marilyn Wolfson Armel '63
 Ruth D. Bartfeld MEd '82
 Joy H. Baxt and Leonard J. Baxt
 Gabriela Bebhick and Leonard Bebhick
 Susan J. Becker MA'82
 Ellen B. Belkin and David H. Belkin
 Carol Berman and Gary C. Berman ♦
 Michele G. Berman and Allan Berman
 James David Blum
 James F. Connors **AU** and Marlene Connors
 Beverly Cook and Melvin S. Cook
 Matthew Dembski '93
 Mark N. Dorf '79
 Nancy E. Duber '82 and Marc N. Duber' 81 ♦
 Clara E. Duffield '99
 Rachel Eitches and Edward Eitches
 Eve Farber and David J. Farber
 Sallie Forman
 Debra Friedmann and Peter Friedmann ♦
 Andrew M. Goldstein JD'75
 Shari Goodman and Harvey Goodman **P**
 Carol V. Graham **P**
 Jay Greenberg
 Deborah E. Greenspan and Jerrold B. Greenspan +
 Brenda Gruss and Daniel O. Hirsch
 Herbert Halperin
 Elizabeth N. Harless **AU**
 Shawn Hausman and Alan B. Hausman
 Estate of Margot Heckman
 Michael S. Heller WCL '89
 Linda S. Herman and Jerry H. Herman
 Sally M. Herman MBA'77 and Stephen A. Herman
 Judith N. Herr MA'96 /
 Kenneth R. Heyman '72 and Miriam M. Heyman
 Ira E. Hoffman
 Sophie R. Hoffman '69 and Howard Hoffman '70
 Saul J. Hoppenstein '85 and Diane M. Hoppenstein **P**
 Karen R. Keats '62 and Robert M. Keats '62 ♦
 Kay Klass and Mark Levitt
 Charles Knapp ♦
 Robert P. Kogod '62 and Arlene R. Kogod ♦
 Carol Kossar and Bernard R. Kossar
 Barbara Ann Kurtzig '68 and Michael Kurtzig
 Joel L. Leibowitz '62
 Ellen Lessans and Stuart H. Lessans
 Dina B. Levine
 Richard G. Linowes **AU** **P**
 Norman H. Lipoff **P**
 Vera Luxner **AU**
 Philip N. Margolius **AU** **P**
 Alan L. Meltzer '73 and Amy Meltzer **P** ♦
 Rona Mendelsohn and Allan Mendelsohn
 Irene Mendelson and Sander Mendelson
 Susan Merker ♦
 Susan Miller and Leonard A. Miller
 Sidney I. Moskowitz '73 and Linda Moskowitz
 Lynne Myers and Donald J. Meyers

Andrew S. Neft '86 and Nonna V. Neft
 Andrea Nordell and Richard Adler
 Melanie F. Nussdorf **P**
 Toni H. Paul '71 and Ronald A. Paul
 Deborah Poliner and Michael C. Poliner
 Sandra C. Pollen and Richard H. Pollen
 Wolfgang Porzick
 Galia D. Reiss and Ori M. Reiss **P** ♦
 Sharon Rennett
 June A. Rogul and Marvin Rogul
 Diane L. Schilit MS '83 and Howard M. Schilit **AU**
 Gail Schwartz and Robb A. Cohen ♦
 Doris Seltzer
 Steven L. Sharp '91
 Margaret A. Silver '94 and Sidney J. Silver
 Myra W. Sklarew **AU**
 Tina B. Small **P** and Albert H. Small, Jr.
 Richard P. Solloway
 Helen Sonenshine and Daniel Sonenshine ♦
 Rochelle Stanfield and Edward G. Grossman
 Peter T. Starr **AU** and Alice C. Hill
 Judith U. Sugarman '73 and Richard L. Sugarman
 Monica Sussman and Richard Sussman
 Lawrence D. Swillinger '68
 Andrea Tannenbaum '86 and Michael Tannenbaum
 Debra Vodenos and Sam Boxerman
 Howard M. Wachtel **AU** and Marie A. Tyler-Mcgraw
 David S. Weisman '80
 Esther Wilner '98 and Elliot Wilner
 Diane C. Zack and Howard Zack
 Cindy K. Zitelman and P. Richard Zitelman

Foundations and Corporations

Baxt Family Foundation, Inc.
 The Jack Chester Foundation
 Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
 June B. Gelbart Foundation
 Isidore Grossman Foundation
 Harris Family Foundation
 Jewish Communal Fund
 Jewish Federation of Greater Washington
 Knapp Family Foundation
 George Zoltan Lefton Family Foundation
 National Philanthropic Trust
 The New York Community Trust
 Robert Russell Memorial Foundation
 Schwab Charitable Fund
 Curt C. And Else Silberman Foundation
 Silver Family Foundation
 United Jewish Endowment Fund
 Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program

KEY

- ♦ Lifetime members of the President's Circle (Individuals who have made cumulative contributions totaling \$100,000)
- AU** Current or former faculty or staff
- P** AU parent
- +** Deceased

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS, THESE STUDENTS RECEIVED JEWISH STUDIES AND ISRAEL STUDIES SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

Estelle Seldowitz Endowed Scholarship

Ruby Coleman
 Macy Klus
 Stephanie Rahtz
 Eliza Schloss
 Hannah Tell
 Macy Ward

Israel Studies Leadership Award

Lindsay Schawelson

Margot Heckman Israel Travel Award

Emma Velinsky

ISRAEL STUDIES COUNCIL

Lillian Klein Abensohn '68
 Gary M. Abramson
 Nancy Alper WCL'79
 Gary C. Berman
 Robb Cohen
 Peter Friedmann
 Robert M. Keats '62
 Richard G. Linowes
 Elizabeth S. Leibowitz '11
 Alan L. Meltzer '73
 Donald J. Myers
 Ori M. Reiss
 Susana Fainbraun Shapiro
 Stephen M. Shapiro '69
 Helen N. Sonenshine



Thank you for supporting our students!

SONENSHINE LECTURE BY KENNETH STERN



Khalil Alsayegh, Michael Brenner, and Lindsay Schawelson

Last spring the Center for Israel Studies hosted the Helen and Daniel Sonenshine Lecture by Kenneth Stern. Stern, an attorney and author, spoke virtually about the subject of his book, *The Conflict Over the Conflict: The Israel/Palestine Campus Debate*. The talk was followed by an in-person student discussion and lively Q&A.

Stern noted that the rise in antisemitism on campuses reflected broader global trends. Yet he cautioned against using definitions like the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s “Working Definition of Antisemitism” (which he helped draft) to limit or censor free speech. He said this definition was originally intended for data collection and clarity on hate crimes, rather than a tool for suppressing anti-Israel rhetoric. Stern argued that the university campus is the ideal place for students to be exposed to difficult concepts, to try out ideas, to be anti-conformist, and to learn functional empathy.

After the lecture, Dr. Brenner spoke with two student panelists, Khalil Alsayegh, a Palestinian graduate student who grew up in the Gaza Strip, and Lindsay Schawelson, a Jewish senior undergraduate who has been deeply involved with the conflict on campus. Khalil emphasized his support for academic freedom and free speech, citing the limitations which he and much of the Arab world have experienced. Lindsay argued for limitations on racist, antisemitic, and anti-LGBTQ rhetoric. The event was co-sponsored by Islamic and Middle East Studies, and the Jewish Studies Program.

Reflecting on the event, Evan DeWitt '23, said rather than the usual feeling of an echo chamber on this issue, where people come into conversations with cemented beliefs, unwilling to listen to others, “I honestly felt refreshed at the ability to disagree and walk away unscathed. My hope is that this event will inspire more difficult conversations about this conflict on campus that maintain respect and dignity despite possible controversy.” Barbie Goldstein

**WE COUNT ON DONOR
SUPPORT TO ENSURE
THE VIBRANCY OF OUR
PROGRAMS.**

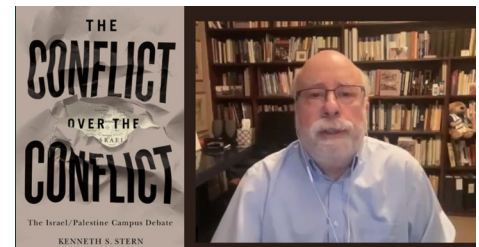
To contribute to our programs
please contact:

CENTER FOR ISRAEL STUDIES

202-885-3780
cutler@american.edu
american.edu/cas/israelstudies

JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

202-885-2425
pnadell@american.edu
american.edu/cas/js



Kenneth Stern

'23, agreed, "I really appreciated how CIS produced this event in an effort to create a space for critical thinking and listening to other people’s perspectives. I really resonated with the emphasis the lecture had on functional empathy." The event was co-sponsored by Islamic and Middle East Studies, and the Jewish Studies Program. ■